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FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF DR. H. K. H. DELFF BY A. E. KROEGER.

In all our knowledge there is something which is controlled not exclusively and pre-eminently by reflection, but by conditions belonging to our personality ; and it is precisely this element which determines the peculiar direction of our thoughts. If everything in knowledge were absolutely and solely conditioned by reflections and arguments of the understanding, it would be possible to convince every person of his errors—at least to a certain degree, corresponding to the capacity of his understanding—and to gain him over to the more correct view. But as matters stand, it would be impossible to convince, for instance, a Darwinian or Materialist of the idea of life and of the rationality which pervades nature, by merely employing arguments, though they were the most profound and acute; just the same as the Darwinian's scholarship and power of combination would not be able to convince any one who feels himself powerfully penetrated by the living and rational character of nature. And how else can this fact be explained than by assuming that even in science we operate not merely with the understanding and our power of reflection, but also with personal sympathies ? Doubtless it is a compact, and in itself connected web of arguments, which, taken from psychological and historical reflection, has been elaborated throughout centuries, and is put forward to prove that man is of divine and not animal origin ; and yet nobody, who has more than superficially and carelessly considered the Darwinian hypothesis, will be induced thereby to approve another and utterly different view of the origin of man than that of the Darwinian theory. On the other hand, the Darwinian will be equally unsuccessful in his efforts to persuade any one who has received the highest or deepest conservations and initiations of philosophy and religion. The reason can only be this: that this or that person not only examines the proofs submitted to him with the eyes of the understanding, but also meets them with a certain vital force of the soul, which, by an essentially different quality, energetically repudiates the one or the other matter, and compels the understanding, which is its servant,

to oppose real or apparent proofs to those other proofs, in order to be able to maintain itself in its own Being under all circumstances. It can also be said—speaking from the stand-point of him who is convinced of the sufficiency of his proofs—that the other person does not take them to heart. But why not? Why, simply because the other's heart clings to quite another mode of thinking, which repels all heterogeneous processes.

There are certain matters in the scientific organization of every person which most decidedly belong to the category of moral convictions and only subsequently develop into logical insights; and even then always in such a way as to remain dependent upon their original source. It is through convictions of this kind, which are in their essence moral, that the peculiar culture of almost every individual is determined in its principles. Hence, it is idle work to dispute or argue, with reasons of reflection, with any one who does not share the presuppositions that move us—that is, our moral convictions, no matter whether such a dispute turns upon general or special matters. The only hope to gain over such an opponent rests on our success in shaking his moral convictions, which again cannot be done by the logical acuteness of the arguments employed, but only by the moral power of the soul, which expresses itself forcibly, whether with or without that logic. For, if those moral convictions are shaken, our opponent will be able to take our arguments to heart, as the phrase goes, and to consider them in the face of his conscience. If they are not so shaken, even the logical and empirical compulsory force of our arguments will not move him effectually; they will be to him mere empty and voiceless words.

The source of all important certainty and conviction is, therefore, to be found in the heart, or, as this word is liable to much abuse, let us rather say, the soul. If we consider man not according to the abstractions of school-learning, but according to concrete experience, it is generally known that man is a personality. But it is not well thinkable that any activity, hence also man's mental activity, can be excepted from being conditioned by the inner motive force of every human being, his personal motivation; as, indeed, every part, or manifestation, must always assume the character of its whole, or its subject. Representations, conceptions, judgments, conclusions, everything pertaining to the consciousness

conditioned by reflection, is a mediated production of the spirit, induced by a perception and connected with an objectivation. It is based essentially on a relation to the things, wherein only their external side, their appearance to the senses, as we say, is shown, and has been abstracted from this manifestation and placed before the objective contemplation of the mind. In this mediated activity, connected with the external, we see at work an immediate relation, which does not proceed from the periphery of things, but endeavors to grasp and represent the whole essence of the object immediately in its separate appearance, and which, proceeding from the inner central and total force of man, his soul, is a peculiar act thereof. This immediate relation, or act, is always composed with and made the basis of that mediated act, and is what we call faith—excluding, of course, every determined—as, for instance, a religious—significance of the word. Thus I also form a judgment of a person's character, not in the first instance by reflecting on its utterances, but, above all, by the general impression his being as a whole makes upon me immediately. In the same way every scientific exposition of a peculiar nature is reducible to certain presuppositions, that remain and are left in part altogether unproven, and which are accepted in no other manner, and, in fact, cannot be accepted in any other manner than by faith. Thus, for instance, it would be clearly ridiculous to maintain that the truth of the mechanical view of the universe results from the mechanical construction of the separate phenomena, instead of saying the reverse—namely, that the truth of these constructions is dependent upon the truth of that fundamental view, since they are altogether impossible without such a presupposition, representing, as they do, only their individual application and development. Hence, also, Epicurus spoke of that *πρόληψις* or anticipation of a spiritual information of a matter, without which, as he says, nothing can be either understood, or investigated, or disputed.¹

Well, these anticipations I have called faith; and this faith is accomplished by the soul, the fundamental power of man and of

¹ "Cicero de Nat. Deor." 1, 16. "Quae est gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrina anticipationem quandam deorum, quam appellat *πρόληψις*. Epicurus, id est anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem, sine qua nec intelligi quidquam nec quaeri nec disputari potest?"

personality. This explains sufficiently what I mean when I say soul, not a chaos of blind feelings, but a living and free force, which gains its knowledge through sentiments and represents its acts in passions. Feeling is blind determinedness; sentiment, on the other hand, is an inner, free-cognizing, cherishing, and determining one's self in another, and another in one's self, and includes a living clearness and evidence—distinct from the mediated knowledge of reflection, which gathers and combines the separated—immediately and directly seizing and appropriating the whole. That which we call faith, therefore, is not blind, but seeing; not chained down, but free and choosing. For consciousness and freedom are not chained down to the system of reflection any more than man's whole being is absorbed in it. That consciousness is only a form of externalizing in regard to the true self and consciousness of man, and borrows the positive power of his seeing and choosing only from this substance, which is its basis. I should prefer, however, to call this knowledge of faith conscience, or, as the Greeks named it, *συνείδησις*, which implies a co-knowing. Conscience is generally taken as meaning a divine law, an *ἄγραφος νόμος*, engraven in the fleshly tablets of the heart. How little valid, or, rather, in what very limited sense this interpretation is valid, is evident among other things from this, that the communist, who aspires to overthrow all law and order, also appeals to his conscience. Hence, conscience signifies that individual stand-point on which every person rests, and by which he is moved.

All knowledge, therefore, demands faith, and faith lies at the basis of all knowledge. All proofs, that extend into the sphere of moral convictions, derive their convincing power from faith alone. Without faith all proofs of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will, are only juggler's tricks, or a weak reed that breaks in your hand at the least pressure. This faith, which is postulated by every proof, is not directed upon the visible components of the proof and their composition, but on the invisible part of the matter. This faith is not darkness, but light; not a weakness, but a strength; not a passive subjection, but an act of the purest personality, and none the less conscious and free because it does not arise in consequence of a deliberation, reflection, and judgment of the understanding.

The judgment on which it is based is an immediate judgment, which does not unfold itself objectively, but enwraps itself in the inwardness of a sentiment.

Hence, when we speak of conviction in the true, significant sense of the word, it is this personal fundamental act of life from which everything of that conviction emanates; this act of life which involves a direct, living connection with the living concrete matter itself. Those persons, however, who accept something merely from hearsay, be they moved by whatever external grounds, or who leap across the chasm of uncertainty by a *salto mortale* with bandaged eyes, may boast neither of conviction nor of faith, but are to be accounted, in the truest sense of the word, *servum pecus imitatorum*, since they have renounced their personality as well as their self-thinking and self-willing, and committed suicide upon their dignity as men.

But faith is, as has already been suggested, and as, indeed, appears from the nature of the case, individually determined and different. Thus, for instance, the first immediate impression which I form and receive of any particular subject, is conditioned by the original relation of my personality, and the direction in which its tendencies and inclinations move. In the same way, the impression which I first conceive of another person, and in consequence whereof I form a judgment of him from his several doings and sayings, is altogether conditioned by my individuality and its natural relation to that of the other person. Hence there arises a danger of falling into a state of general indifference and scepticism, since we seem forced to declare every true personal conviction valid merely as such, and truth seems determined only by individuality. This would lead us to the doctrine of the Sophists: That is true which appears to each one as true. Nevertheless, there is precisely in the region of personality a sphere of the universally valid which has far greater motive power than anything in the sphere of mere conception. This is the sphere of the Moral. Some have tried to represent this as a delusion, by pointing out how different notions about the just and proper are to be found among different people, and how the just and proper seem, therefore, based only upon tradition and habit. Without dwelling upon the fact that, nevertheless, certain universal and common fundamental traits can be recognized amid these differ-

ences, and remain ineradicable, we shall merely observe that the true part of this argument is simply this: the moral categories of consciousness, or of the mind, are certainly dependent upon the history, or the historical development, of mankind, or of any particular people. The attainment of a higher degree of culture is essentially connected with the consciousness of an ideal and of its unconditioned right in regard to the lower stage, and the right of this consciousness in regard to morality surely no one will dispute, who examines at the same time the sphere of *Æsthetics*, and compares, for instance, the Hellenic ideal of beauty with that of the negro, or even of the Phœnician or Egyptian, and who considers, further, that the Beautiful and the Good belong necessarily to the same sphere. For surely no one will pretend that the Beautiful is based on an imitation of nature, and that, in order to create Beauty, nothing but a correct eye is necessary. Beauty and Morality—let me say it boldly—resolve themselves finally into an Unconditioned, and melt together, therefore, with a certain religiousness, if I may say so. Or, does morality consist in a naked heroism, a mere energy of the will, which knows how to carry out a boundless desire in spite of all obstacles, and which, even in succumbing, does not give up itself? Or, is morality that which we measure with the barometer of criminal statistics? Or, do we exhaust its conception by the predicates of honesty and respectability? Do not these belong rather also to the appearance, whereas morality relates to the motives, which prompt our acts, or which prompt the personality of those—who otherwise would be determined only by their education, habits, and temperament—in spite of themselves? Hence, morality is rather a filling of one's self with the contents of absolute life, a subjugation of the innermost source of personality to a certain universal, independent validity and obligation, which is the same for, and common to, all individual persons, in spite of their individuality; and which is, therefore, before and above them, within itself, and points to an independent source, to an Absolute, to an absolute Essence. Hence, in this quite general sense we must expressly maintain the identity of morality and religiousness, and we can say now that, when we expressly disregard every particular historical form of religion, and every single philosophically thinkable or historically factual development, and mediating form thereof,

the validity of a faith is altogether determined by its relation to the Moral—that is, to the universal Religious. But even taking the Moral by itself—and comprehending it less in its innermost essence—we have already a standard measure for the truth of any view of the world. And such a view, wherein the result may certainly be veiled, but which, if carried out actually, would end in moral indifference or positive immorality, is unquestionably condemned by that very fact, no matter how it may bribe by its probability.

I maintain, therefore, in this sense, that that science has the better right, and is entitled to claim it, which is in its spirit the most religious and can maintain itself in its results before the judgment of common morality. But when I say “the most religious,” I do not mean a repeating of everything that has been written of and is generally accepted or practiced as religion. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that the more certain we feel of a matter, the more free we are of its accidental appearance. Nor do I mean by it the worship of a supermundane God, but generally a disposition to think in the most sublime manner the ground as well as the becoming and the essence of the world. But if I perchance worship a supermundane God, I do so—let the other mediations through which I arrived at this worship be what they may—only through faith; that is, through the before-mentioned conscious and free life-act of my personality.

The whole natural position of cognition is moved out of place whenever we try to make reflective knowing the only source of all certainty and all peculiar cognition. The proof of reflection always presupposes and includes the inner certitude of faith. But this faith, this immediate taking hold by means of sensation, although it contains the subject-matter itself, contains it, after all, only in its undecided generality. Hence, if we desire to know it in its particularity and separate moments, we are necessarily driven into the path of common understanding, and must make use of it as a means for our purpose. And if we now follow further that immediate certitude in faith, nothing else will remain to us within that region to make us certain of the particular and separate moments in our cognition than the conclusive proof in independent thinking and the agreement of experience. For, as little as we ought to allow ourselves to be persuaded of the truth

of a subject by mere hearsay or authority, even so little is it proper for man—and can it result in peculiar and personal cognition—to accept as something external whatsoever develops itself particularly or connects itself with that subject in his knowledge—in his full conviction of the certitude of the subject. In truth, the essence of cognition is to be found only when we think out from one independent beginning the whole particular and separate contents of the subject to the end. Here, therefore, and here alone, the saying is true: *credo quia intelligo*; not *intelligo quia credo*. These maxims have both their full validity, each in its place. I must believe the subject in order to be able to comprehend it; but what particular and separate moments it may contain, of that I can believe only so much as I comprehend.

Let us consider the contradictory conditions that attach to knowledge, the one-sidedness of thought, which always sees at one time only one part of the whole, and is inclined to believe that part to be the whole, and the mere externality of things, which is all that the things really present to the examination of knowledge; let us consider how the certain results, of which the honest scientific investigator boasted at one time, became tottering again on the next occasion, or turn out to be only relatively valid and correct; let us consider the whole character of knowledge, which is that of progress, of approximation, and which—as well on account of the inexhaustible nature of experience as by reason of the subjective inclination of man, and, finally, also by reason of the mere mediateness to which knowledge is confined—permits it to arrive at the subject-matter itself only through a series of conclusions; let us consider, further, the infinite possibilities and thinkabilities which offer themselves as well in the way of an *a priori* reason as by the glittering character of the empirical material; and, finally, let us reflect on the feelings of the proud systematician himself, and ask him whether he does not secretly ask himself daily, upon reviewing his worshipped constructions: After all, are they really true? I say, let us consider all this, and we shall see the folly of endeavoring to make abstract or empirical knowledge the *only* basis of life. In these days of ours we run after an ideal, and persuade ourselves that we can surely attain it, although in truth it is purely utopian. By the division of labor, in the face of an

infinite amount of detail, men expect finally to gain that perfection and freedom from error which they have missed hitherto so sorely. But they forget that the detail is really infinite, and, above all, that it is a matter of subjective apprehension, of which the relativity of all things human can never get rid. And, after all, the essential, that is to say, everything, has already been decided, and what remains to be done is only to carry the matter out to an end in all directions; and, although this end appears as yet and for itself ever so far removed, nobody will dream of postponing his conviction in regard to the fundamental principles and their next essential consequences until that time—a clear proof of the correctness of our assertion that in all great matters it is not knowledge, but faith, which casts the decisive vote. But, apart from that, let no one persuade himself that the thinkability and probability of a view of life is decisive and determinative in regard to a man's mode of thought and general conduct. For, if such were the case, everything would become uncertain; all our supports would totter and break, and man's mind would become a play of the waves and winds. Even like a rudderless boat, since the honesty of conviction seems to command us to follow now this and now the other probability, and to sacrifice the happiest and most quieting faith for its sake. But life and history also have a right, and an older right. To us it seems folly and unnatural to make knowledge the only valid authority, as if only that were true which some *one* man thinks.

Even in science the occupying of a particular stand-point from principle cannot depend alone upon intellectual grounds (grounds of reflection), and, in point of fact, does not so depend. But let us look back from the events of to-day upon the course of history, and witness how the humane character of man has been developed and cultivated, and, if we shall then become convinced that we have really made progress, we shall no longer hesitate to adopt the moral and humane presuppositions, which are the basis of the consciousness of the cultured man in his present historical conditionedness, as measures and criteria of our convictions. My historical remarks have shown me even in Christianity a specific—and by no means the least—progress of human culture and morals. In whatever we are spiritually ahead of the ancients, we owe the advance altogether to Christianity. The humanism at the close

of the last and the beginning of the present century was a well-justified reaction ; for the Hellenism, from which it started, is an essential and independent element of culture, which mankind must on no account relinquish, though it also surely does not make Christianity dispensable. But when that tendency of humanism turned in later times hostile against Christianity, it destroyed the roots of its own life. For, let folly and bad intentions in church-dogma and cultus have changed Christianity ever so much for the worse, we at least cannot refuse to recognize that it is also a lever of culture ; and to oppose it as such must, therefore, necessarily influence the position which the opponent himself occupies in the sphere of culture. Nor should it be forgotten that this humanism owed Christianity that spicy taste which alone could make it palatable to our days.

When Herder hears the spirit of harmony, the world-spirit, sing his song of enchantment which “ draws soul close to soul and heart to heart,” and when he closes thus :

“ Enchained within one feeling,
We’re one perennial All ;
In one chord gathered, pealing,
God’s echo we recall ” —

he seems to speak pantheistically, Spinoza-like ; but the Christian idea of love has given to abstract pantheism the living glow and active nerve. Even the opponents of Christianity stand under its influence and adorn themselves with its gems. Even a Julian had to adopt the policy of recommending the Christian love of neighbor to his pagan subjects ; and who does not see that the Stoic Epictetus and the Neo-platonist Hierokles, in his translation of the golden sayings of Pythagoras, gathered the perfume of their morality from Christian education, or from the invisible influences of Christianity. But let it be well observed that we have here to deal, not with Christian church-dogmas, nor, indeed, with any fixed opinions or assertions, but with the religious, moral, and scientific by-taste, so to speak, which every person, who grows up in the charmed circle of a Christian-Hellenic world, sucks in with his mother’s milk. This taste, this invisible tincture or fundamental tone, or rather this atmosphere of our higher culture, ought to have some, and, in fact, a predominant, influence on our

judgment, and point out to us the worth or worthlessness of scientific standpoints in a decisive and directory manner.

Some one has said : “*La conscience, n'est elle pas plus que la science ?*” Undoubtedly a moral-ideal sentiment—an ideal claim of the soul of universally valid significance and harmonizing with the nature of man and of humanity in an immediate manner—is always to be preferred to an hypothesis of the understanding, so far as credibility is concerned. And all certainty in matters of principle is, after all, reducible to an inner sympathetic feeling, which even the thinker must always rouse simultaneously with his deductions if he wants to be sure of the growth and prospering of his ideas on foreign soil. It requires more to believe in a proof than merely to find it correct, more to give it credibility than the *quod erat demonstrandum*. In the same way the acutest proofs, the most imposing collections of dates, and their most cunning combinations, are not able to shake hypotheses, which we assume *on principle*, and of the truth of which we have a permanent conviction in our mind, even though it should involve a modification of the special, logical demonstrations thereof. Hypotheses assumed on principle are independent of reasonings which belong to logical demonstrations ; such assumptions coincide most closely with our moral decisions. But they are on that account in no way blind and wanting motives. It is a very dangerous error to believe that only the reasoning of our understanding has universal validity, and that rationality and evidence are manifested only in logical proof.

Another remark of the profoundest significance which arises here is this: that it is not things or their outward perceptions which form the views men have of them, but that it is man with his universal and particular constitution who makes these views through the things or their outward perceptions. These are merely the substance, which receives its form—its specific significance—from man.

We do not know whether this view was the basis of Kant's “Critic of Pure Reason ;” at any rate, the consequences of Kant's work will prove to be too far-reaching and unjustified. For this view does not necessarily imply the necessity that, with the determining influence of subjectivity, this subjectivity should lack all *objectively*, universally valid measure. As we have already shown up for the

particular individual or personal constitution, such universality in the religious-moral foundations of consciousness, we shall also point out the same for the general and common understanding, or reflection, of man in the categories which condition all intellectual consciousness and all rational perception. On the other hand, we find that Kant, who does not touch the personal matter at all, and moves solely in the region of universality and abstraction, looks upon the categories only as subjective determinations, and thus repudiates an *objective* knowing, as not given to man. In doing this he takes these categories, it is true, not from the universally accessible nature of consciousness and thinking, but from the traditional, artificial schematism of psychology and logic, and hence they can claim no universal validity in his super-artificial presentation. He goes no further than their historical existence, and does not consider at all their natural organization and life-movement. But this result cannot satisfy us at all; it is, on the contrary, as compared with empiricism, the other extreme; and this empiricism, which, in its lack of science and untruth, lifts up its head every day more boldly and prefers every day more tyrannical claims, can be considered truly beaten only when we shall be fortunate enough to find in the two extremes of criticism and empiricism the happy mean, and discover in the all-determining subjectivity, at the same time, the paths and transitions that lead to the objective being of things. Thus, true science must in the end show itself to be the higher and in itself existing unity of criticism and empiricism.

KNOWLEDGE AND THE RELATIVITY OF FEELING.

BY JOHN DEWEY.

The doctrine of the Relativity of knowledge is one of the most characteristic theories of modern thought. To many, indeed, it seems the sum of all modern wisdom. That we cannot know Being, but must confine ourselves to sequences among phenomena—this appears to many the greatest achievement of thought: a discovery whose full meaning it was reserved for the Nineteenth